

The Briefing, published bimonthly by the City of Bloomington, is mailed to our residents and businesses. Direct comments and requests for Braille, larger print or computer disk to Communications Administrator Janine Hill, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3027; PH 952-563-8819; TTY 952-563-8740; FAX 952-563-8715; E-MAIL jhill@ci.bloomington.mn.us.

Web site: www.ci.bloomington.mn.us

BLOOMINGTON CITY COUNCIL



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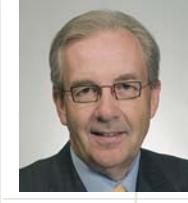
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Elected officials presented for informational purposes.

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The City of Bloomington complies with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its services, programs, or activities. Upon request, accommodation will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all City of Bloomington services, programs, and activities. The City has designated coordinators to facilitate compliance with the ADA, and to coordinate compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations. For more information, contact the Human Services Division, City of Bloomington, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington, MN 55431-3027; (952)563-8733 (Voice); 952-563-8740 (TTY).

Upon request, this information can be available in Braille, large print, audio tape and/or electronic format.

FOLLOWING THE MONEY

HIGH QUALITY SERVICES REMAIN AFFORDABLE

By Mayor Gene Winstead

THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON's mission is to deliver consistently high quality services. The City's goal is to keep these services affordable to all residents through strong financial planning and budgeting.

Compared to other monthly bills, City services remain a bargain. For example, a homeowner living in a median-priced, single-family home in Bloomington pays less than \$22 a month for police services that are available round-the-clock, 365 days a year. This homeowner pays \$17.34 a month for public works services that ensure streets are well-maintained and safe for motorists. See chart below.

How does the City keep the price of services to residents affordable? The City prides itself on solid financial planning and using a "steady as you go" approach to the cost of property tax-supported services – meaning that incremental adjustments are made slowly and on an as-needed basis. In addition, the City uses a "pay as you go" approach to spending and doesn't defer payment on projects that can increase the costs in the long run. This approach was instituted during the economic downturn in the late 1990s. When it comes to staffing, every position is carefully analyzed. The City engages only the number of employees that can be supported through an economic downturn.

For less than the cost of some monthly cable TV bills, here are a few of the services the City provides:

- Fire safety and protection.
- Parks and playgrounds.
- Plowing and maintaining streets and sidewalks.
- Police protection.
- Park maintenance.
- Sealcoating, overlays, reconstructed streets.
- Well-child clinics.

and Recreation programs. Police services are essential in maintaining a safe community during difficult economic times. We may not ever require police to come to our own homes, but that doesn't mean that they're not working for us on a daily basis.

Renewing and maintaining our capital infrastructure needs to continue to be a priority. As our city ages, infrastructure improvements are needed to maintain roads. New, more sustainable improvements save the City money in the long term. Since 2004, almost every street in the city has been improved by sealcoating, overlaying or reconstruction. Regular maintenance to our streets also ensures that they are safer, last longer and require fewer expensive repairs in the future. Our Public Works programs are extremely efficient and cost-effective.

The City recognizes that the economy is impacting many residents and businesses in the community. However, our excellent financial strength allows us to absorb some of the economic impact during a downturn without adversely affecting services. I am confident that through our organizational strength and strategic outlook, Bloomington will weather this storm.

CHECKS AND BALANCES

The chart, left, shows how the monthly cost of property tax-supported services is divided among City departments. The cost of City services for a resident living in a median-priced, single-family home assessed at \$242,800 is \$64.81. Although a slight increase from last year, services have increased an average of \$1 per month in the past two years.

Public works, police and fire services account for about 66 percent of the monthly services for which homeowners pay.

From 1995 through 2002, utility fees remained unchanged. For 2009, utility fees will increase \$1.88, or 4.99 percent per month, for an annual average increase of 3.7 percent since 2000.



2009 CITY SERVICE COSTS FOR A MEDIAN HOME VALUE OF \$242,800

Service	2009
Police \$21.	76
Public Works	17.34
Community Services	9.16
Debt and capital	5.81
Community Development	3.97
Fire Response	3.79
Technical Services	2.65
Tax Abatement	0.33
Monthly cost in 2009	\$64.81

FINANCIAL UPDATE

CITY COUNCIL APPROVES 2009 PROPERTY TAX LEVY

N AN EFFORT TO MAINTAIN an affordable price for City services, the Bloomington City Council adopted a property tax levy for 2009 of \$43,315,480, an increase of 3 percent from 2008.

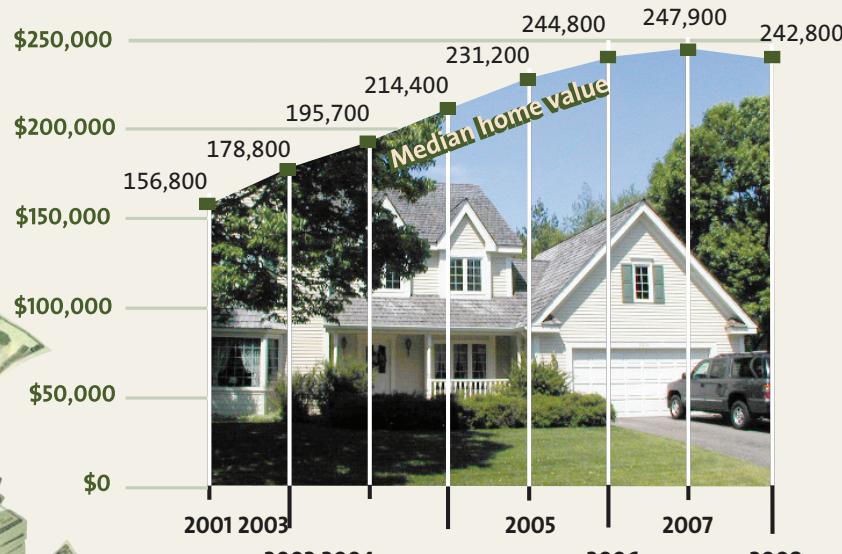
Based on this tax levy, the City's portion of 2009 total residential property taxes – approximately 29 percent – will have increased from \$62.82 per month in 2007 to \$64.81 per month in 2009, for a median-value home assessed at \$242,800. Having experienced a slight decrease to \$61.96 for 2008, property taxes have increased an average of \$1 per month over the past two years.

As specified by state law, property values used for 2008 pay 2009 taxes and are based on 2007 property sales. Home sales in 2008 reflect the continuing housing downturn and will be the basis for the 2009 assessment for taxes payable in 2010. Total market value for all Bloomington properties was nearly level at \$11.8 billion for taxes payable in 2008 and 2009.

CONSERVATIVE INCREASE

"Including the 2009 increase, the City's total levy dollar increase averaged 4.68 percent annually over the last 10 years," explained Chief Financial Officer Lori Economy-Scholler. "Part of the increase was due to the City not receiving \$6.7 million in market value credit from the State of Minnesota, as well as reflecting about 1 percent in new community growth."

The City's strong financial position and conservative spending pattern have helped keep tax increases low as evidenced by the City's achievement of the highest bond ratings from Standard and Poor's, Moody's and Fitch credit rating agencies. Part of the reason for those high rankings is that the City models most of its major funds over a 5- to 10-year timeframe and anticipates that there will be economic cycles in those timeframes. The City

**2001 - 2008 MEDIAN HOME VALUE**

developed strategies in the 1990s to deal with normal cycle variation.

In setting the City's property tax levy for both 2008 and 2009, the City Council had anticipated that it may again lose some or all of its Market Value Homestead Credit and had not budgeted to receive that money for its operations. The wisdom of this was confirmed when the Governor "unallotted" all of the City's second-half payment for 2008, which would also seem to indicate the City would not see any of its 2009 credit. As such, the City has not had to reduce its service levels – some of which expect increases in demand during economic downturns.

REAL ESTATE MARKETS

One of Bloomington's strengths when it comes to spreading tax burden is the balanced nature of real estate located in the city. Historically, tax capacity in Bloomington has been split approximately in half between residential, including apartment uses, and commercial/industrial uses.

"This balance helps smooth out citywide tax base changes since markets for varying types of property don't always move in synch," said Bloomington City Assessor Jack Pasternacki. "For example, as

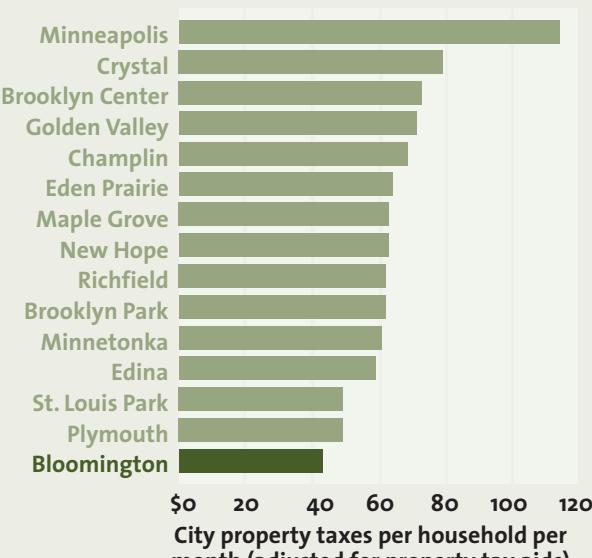
residential markets started to slow in the past couple of years, commercial/industrial values were still quite strong. The current economic climate, however, is having a more uniform negative impact on real estate values of most property types."

Taken in a larger context, Bloomington's housing market has shown growth over the past decade. Even with the recent price corrections, a look at the 10-year trend shows that Bloomington's median home value has gained significantly. See chart above. For commercial/industrial properties, completion of two new office buildings will help to offset some of the current weakness in the market. Additional significant new developments are in the planning stages.

RESPONSIBLE BUDGETING

The City made adjustments in 2002 through 2009 for declining local revenues. Even with the anticipated loss of state monies in 2009, the City has an ongoing commitment to provide cost-effective services while minimizing increases.

For more information, contact Chief Financial Officer Lori Economy-Scholler at 952-563-8791 or leconomy@ci.bloomington.mn.us.

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD COST OF SERVICES IN 2008**AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD COST OF SERVICES IN 2008 FOR 15 HENNEPIN COUNTY CITIES**

In a 2008 comparison of 15 communities in Hennepin County with more than 20,000 residents, the average household cost of services in terms of property taxes and property tax aids (when adjusted for fiscal disparities) showed Bloomington ranking lowest, with the average household paying \$43.63 per month in property taxes to the City. The comparison was based on almost 38,000 Bloomington households, including single-family homes, apartments and condominiums. Data from the League of Minnesota Cities is incorporated in the graph at left. For a breakdown of what the average single-family homeowner pays for specific City services, see the chart on page two.

**PUBLIC WORKS****INNOVATOR****BLOOMINGTON UTILITIES SUPERINTENDENT HONORED****BLOOMINGTON UTILITIES**

Superintendent Bob Cockriel was recently named Superintendent of the Year by the Minnesota Public Works Association.



This very prestigious award recognizes those in the public works field who have made significant contributions to the profession. To qualify for the award, nominees must have displayed innovative applications of new or existing technologies, equipment, project management and service delivery systems, in addition to outstanding efforts in career development, personal growth and team building.

Cockriel has more than 30 years of service, including the last 15 years with the City of Bloomington. Cockriel received his bachelor's degree in public administration from Metropolitan State University. He also holds a master's degree in infrastructure systems engineering from the University of Minnesota.

"I view this award as positive recognition of Bloomington's City Council, professional administration and dedicated employees, who make it a pleasure to serve this community."

GOT RABBIT EARS?

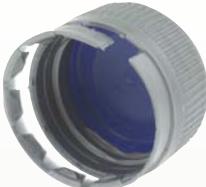
LISTEN UP FOR INFORMATION YOU NEED TO KNOW

SOON ALL TELEVISIONS will broadcast only in digital. Residents who rely on antennas (including "rabbit ears") to receive broadcast signals on TV sets will need to obtain separate digital-to-analog converter boxes to watch over-the-air TV. These boxes receive digital signals and convert them into analog format for display on analog TVs. Analog sets connected to such converter boxes will display digital broadcasts, but not necessarily in the full, original digital quality. All other TV components, such as VCRs and DVD players, will work as they did before the conversion.

For more information, call the Federal Communications Commission at 1-888-225-5322 or visit the Commission's digital television website at www.dtv.gov.

TOWARD A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

PUT A CAP ON WASTE AVEDA STORES ACCEPT PLASTIC BOTTLE CAPS



PLASTIC BOTTLE caps are made of a different type of plastic than bottles themselves. Leaving the caps on bottles contaminates the load of recyclables at the curb since different types of plastic melt at different temperatures in the recycling process. Don't throw plastic bottle caps in the trash, where they may end up in a landfill. Instead, visit the Aveda store at the Mall of America where they are collecting plastic bottle caps. To put a lid on this devastation, the Aveda store at the Mall of America is collecting all rigid plastic caps. This includes caps that twist on with a threaded neck, such as caps on shampoo, water, soda, milk and other beverage bottles, in addition to flip top caps on food product bottles such as ketchup and mayonnaise, laundry detergents and some jar lids such as peanut butter.

For more information, call Public Works Project Coordinator Jean Buckley at 952-563-8751.



OPTING OUT SAY 'NO' TO UNSOLICITED PHONE BOOKS

MORE THAN 500 MILLION phone books are printed every year, which amounts to nearly two books for every person in the country. To avoid receiving telephone books, visit www.yellowpagesGoesGreen.org, click on "Opt Out" at the top of the page or <http://dexknows.whitepages.com>, click on "Directory Options" at the bottom of the page, type in your information and select "o" for number of phone books.

DID YOU KNOW? RECYCLING FACT



RECYCLING 35 PERCENT of U.S. trash saves enough energy to fuel six million homes annually, generates \$5.2 billion in raw materials each year and reduces vehicle emissions equivalent to taking 36 million cars off the road.

POWER DRAINERS UNPLUG TO SAVE ENERGY

ENERGY DRAINERS ARE devices that although turned off, still suck power from electrical outlets. Common household items such as computer monitors, cell phone chargers and video game consoles all use power even when they're turned off. In fact, the average American household may have 20 - 40 such devices in their homes. To save energy, unplug these items when you are away from home for an extended period of time. There's no need to unplug power strips; simply turn them off.

Earth Action Heroes protect the earth. Whether it's saving energy or guarding Bloomington's precious natural resources, these individuals are making a difference. Here are your neighbors in action...

EARTH ACTION HEROES IKEA CO-WORKERS AND CONSERVATIONISTS

BLOOMINGTON IKEA EMPLOYEES are changing the way they impact the environment and how their customers shop. How do they do it? Yes, they have recycling bins around every corner and only offer reusable shopping bags, but IKEA employees are also given a crash course in recycling, waste prevention and energy conservation at the start of their employment. Once new employees have completed the course, they are invited to participate in IKEA's environmental action plan. Employees also receive follow-up classes and are encouraged to pass their knowledge on to co-workers and customers.

IKEA Environmental Coordinator Angie Wolper meets with staff once a month to help them see where they can make a difference.

"It's amazing the ideas that come from just talking to people about their daily routines," Wolper said. "We always discover some way to be more environmentally friendly."



Wolper gives the example of an employee who, after noticing that broken glass was tossed in the garbage, suggested that the glass instead be donated to a local business that creates countertops out of recycled materials. Wolper followed up on the suggestion. Today, broken glass is recycled and eventually makes its way back into the store as a new countertop.

Glass is not the only material recycled by IKEA employees. Cardboard, paper, plastics, wood, organics and ceramics are all reused. Returned items are repaired for resale. Broken ceramic pieces are offered for free to IKEA's crafty mosaic-making customers. Even old uniforms get a new life. Then there's the organics recycling program, which removes more than 100,000 pounds of food from the waste stream per year. IKEA has also started using straws and utensils made from corn, which are biodegradable and can be composted with left over food.

Bloomington resident Dorothy Sheaffer, pictured above, makes sure cardboard is recycled.

"I feel fantastic about the program," Sheaffer said. "I love that I can do my part to help."



Facilities Manager Mark Hedin has been tasked with reducing energy consumption in the Bloomington store 25 percent by 2010. Hedin started by reducing the wattage of fluorescent warehouse lights, which caused no visible reduction, but was a huge energy saver.

"We have an excellent energy management system," Hedin said. "We make sure we don't over-illuminate the building. Lights are on a time-based schedule and computers shut down automatically at night."

Hedin is working on implementing an irrigation system for the grounds that will measure the water content in the soil to prevent over-watering.

Good communication is the key to starting any new program.

"We inform our employees and customers every step of the way," stated Hedin. "That's how we make it work."

TIME TO CLEAN SPRING 2009 CURBSIDE CLEANUP

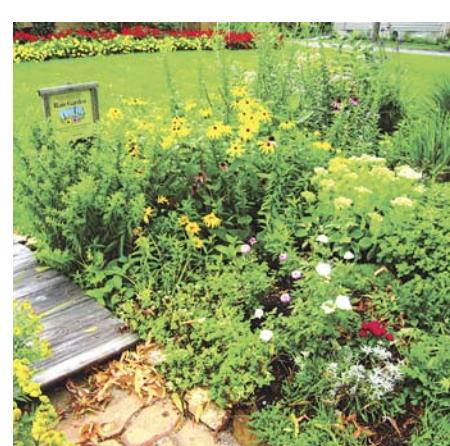
SPRING CURBSIDE CLEANUP is right around the corner. Be sure you're prepared by setting your materials at the curb before 7 a.m. on your pickup day. Remember, trucks go through only once. Please do not set out appliances such as refrigerators and air conditioners until the morning of your collection day. When people cut lines in these appliances to steal the copper, Freon or Chlorofluorocarbons are released into the air and accelerate the depletion of ozone.

Seniors or disabled residents should contact their Neighborhood Watch block captains or call Ask the City, 952-563-4957 V/TTY, in advance for assistance. Requests for assistance must be made at least one week in advance.

Think green. Consider donating or selling usable items. Look for Citywide Garage Sale information in the April Briefing.

SCHEDULE, FROM WEST TO EAST

West of Normandale	Saturday, April 18
Normandale to France	Saturday, April 25
France to Penn	Saturday, May 2
Penn to Portland	Saturday, May 9
East of Portland	Saturday, May 16



RAIN GARDEN WORKSHOPS PROTECTING OUR WATERWAYS

THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON and Lower Minnesota River Watershed District are hosting two rain garden workshops for Bloomington residents, **Thursdays, May 7 and May 21, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.** The workshops, facilitated by Metro Blooms, a nonprofit gardening organization, and local landscape ecologist Rusty Schmidt, will take place in the Bloomington

Public Works building, 1700 West 98th Street. Hennepin County Master Gardeners will also be on hand to answer all your gardening questions.

To register, visit www.metroblooms.org or call 651-699-2426.

CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

IT'S FARE FOR ALL GROCERY BUYING PROGRAM SAVES YOU MONEY



THE FARE FOR ALL grocery buying program is available to anyone who wants to save 30 - 40 percent on groceries. A variety of food packages containing nutritious foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, frozen meats, rice and pasta are available for \$10 - \$20.

New customers may register and prepay for food packages at Creekside, **Saturday, February 21, 10 - 11 a.m.**, and pick up food packages on **Saturday, March 21**. Future distribution dates, to be announced, will be the 3rd or 4th Saturday of each month. Participants are encouraged to volunteer in their community. This program is cosponsored by the Emergency Foodshelf Network, in partnership with Bloomington Human Services.

For more information, call Ask the City at 952-563-4957 V/TTY.



KEEP YOUR MIND AND BODY ACTIVE HOME AND TECHNOLOGY EXPO FOR AGING ADULTS

THIS FREE EVENT takes place at Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, on **Saturday, April 4, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.** Created especially for active, aging adults, this expo provides information on housing options, City services and the new technology available to aging adults and their families. Attendees are invited to visit with providers and try the innovative new technology designed to assist older adults with everyday tasks, including keeping the body and mind active. A seminar on caregiving will also be held. For information, visit the City's website at www.ci.bloomington.mn.us.

READ ALL ABOUT IT HUMAN SERVICES PROVIDES VALUABLE SERVICES

THE HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION provides valuable programs and services to community members of all ages.

Human Services' publications' such as *Senior Splash*' are now being transitioned into the award-winning *Briefing* in an effort to reach even more residents. Expect more detailed program information, feature stories, in-depth profiles on members of your community, volunteer spotlights and more.

In addition to working with older adults, people with disabilities and low income families, Human Services enhances the quality of life and services for all Bloomington residents through partnerships, advocacy and resources' and by providing valuable information. The Human Rights Commission and Bloomington Sister City organization are supported by the Division.

For more information, call Ask the City at 952-563-4957 V/TTY or visit the City's website at www.ci.bloomington.mn.us, keywords: Human Services.



TAX SERVICES OFFERED

FREE INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE is available at Creekside Community Center, 9801 Penn Avenue South, on a first-come, first-served basis to individuals who meet income-qualifying guidelines. Tax assistance includes the following programs:

ACCOUNTABILITY MINNESOTA

AccountAbility Minnesota will provide tax assistance to individuals with incomes of \$30,000 or less, and families with incomes of \$45,000 or less.

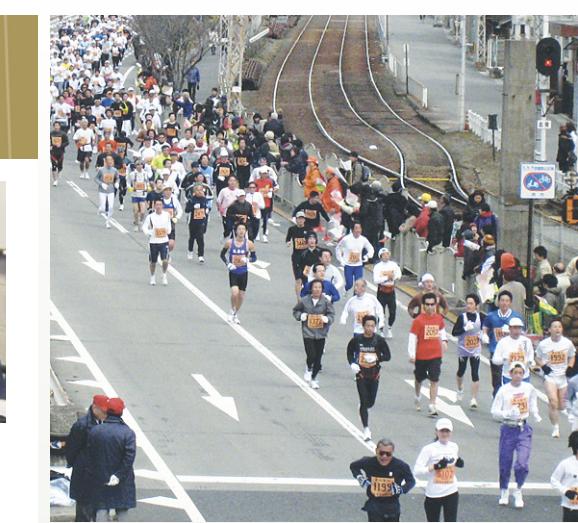
When: Tuesdays, January 27 - April 14
Time: 5:30 - 9:30 p.m.
When: Thursdays, January 29 - April 9
Time: 5:30 - 9:30 p.m.
When: Saturdays, January 31 - April 11
Time: 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. (*In March only, hours will be 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.*)



AARP TAX-AIDE

The City of Bloomington is partnering with AARP Tax-Aide to provide free tax preparation services to middle- and low-income taxpayers, with special attention to persons age 60 and older. The AARP Tax-Aide program prepares personal income tax returns including the 1040, 1040A and 1040EZ. Taxpayers with complex tax returns are advised to seek paid tax assistance.

When: Mondays, February 2 - April 13 (*Except February 16*)
Time: 9 a.m. - noon
When: Tuesdays, February 3 - April 14



RACE OF A LIFETIME BLOOMINGTON RUNNERS COMPETE IN JAPAN

THE SENSHU INTERNATIONAL

Marathon takes place in Osaka, Japan, on **Sunday, February 15**. Bloomington representatives Ashley Anklam and Mike Olson will be there with their running shoes on, ready to compete.

Each year, two runners are selected by Bloomington Sister City Organization as part of a cultural exchange between Bloomington and its sister city Izumi City, Japan. This 26.2-mile international marathon invites runners from all over the world to compete. To learn more, contact Bloomington Sister City Organization at 952-563-8713; TTY 952-563-8740 or visit www.bloomington-izumi.org.



IMPROVE YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE

POSITIVE AGING

TALKING ABOUT AGING IN THE COMMUNITY

HUMAN SERVICES WANTS TO ENGAGE Bloomington residents in a conversation about what it means to "age positively" in the community. Traditional programs for older adults may meet the needs of those who created them in the 1970s, but baby boomers and others considering retirement are now looking for something different. Technology is expanding rapidly to allow people to be safe and vital in their own homes and community even longer.

We need your input on topics ranging from social needs, health and wellness and concierge-type services. If you are interested in being a part of the conversation, contact Human Services Coordinator Tracy Smith at 952-563-4955.



SHARING CUSTOMS AND CULTURE GLOBAL CELEBRATION 2009 VENDORS NEEDED

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! The 2nd Annual Global Celebration will be held **Saturday, June 20**, at Civic Plaza. This special event is a cultural kaleidoscope of diverse entertainment, colorful exhibits, ethnic cuisine and fun games and activities for children. World cultural crafters, artists, entertainers and vendors are being sought. For more information, call Ask the City 952-563-4957 V/TTY.

CALLING ALL RESIDENTS CELL PHONE TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP AT CREEKSIDER

HUMAN SERVICES and AT&T invite residents, 50 years old and older, to learn more about how to use their personal cell phones. The workshop takes place at Creekside Community Center, 9801 Penn Avenue South, on **Monday, March 30, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

Instructions on basic cell phone operation, voicemail and text messaging will be covered. Attendees will also receive a 20-minute, one-on-one coaching session with an AT&T cell phone expert. There is no charge to attend, but reservations are required. For more information, call 952-563-4944 or 952-563-4957 V/TTY.

WANTED: YOUR OLD CELL PHONE

If you'd like to donate a cell phone with a wall charger that was purchased within the last five years, drop it off at Creekside. Volunteers with Qwest Pioneers will clear the phones of personal data and reprogram them to access 911. Donated phones will be distributed to older adult Bloomington residents and residents with disabilities or medical conditions.

ARTS, PARKS AND RECREATION

BUMP, SET, SPIKE! SENIOR VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE

THE BORN AGAIN JOCKS VOLLEYBALL

League welcomes men, 55 years and older, with all levels of playing ability. For more information, call Dick Wortman at 952-888-1814.

When: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, through April.

Time: Warm-up 8:45 a.m., games 9 a.m.

Where: Kennedy Activity Center, 9701 Nicollet Avenue S.

JUST FOR FUN

MEN'S, WOMEN'S AND CO-REC SOFTBALL

When: One evening per week, begins May 2.

Where: Valley View and Dred Scott Playfields.

Team cost: \$780 + tax, recreational fast pitch and doubleheader.

Deadline: March 14.



BATTER UP!

AN OLD-FASHIONED BALL GAME

TIME TO GEAR UP for adult softball.

More than 300 teams compete throughout the summer and fall at recreational and competitive levels. Hosted at Dred Scott, 10820 Bloomington Ferry Road, and Valley View Playfields, 9000 Portland Avenue South. Leagues are for adults, ages 18 and older. Divisions include men's, men's fast pitch, women's and co-rec.

Summer leagues form in March and play May through July. Teams are sanctioned in the ASA and USSSA.

For more information, call Recreation Supervisor Jason Hicks at 952-563-8880, or e-mail jhicks@ci.bloomington.mn.us.

MOVING FOR HEALTH FITNESS FOR OLDER ADULTS

PARKS AND RECREATION offers a variety of fun fitness opportunities for seniors, such as exercise classes, bocce ball, Born Again Jocks, T'ai Chi Chih, line dancing, walking clubs and more. For more information on wellness programs, call 952-563-8877 or e-mail parksrec@ci.bloomington.mn.us.

SUMMER SPECTRUM SUPER SIGN-UP SATURDAY!



SIGN-UP for youth programs in person on Super Sign-Up Saturday or register online at www.ci.bloomington.mn.us, keyword: Spectrum. Look for more details in the Summer Spectrum 2009 program brochure, which will arrive in February.

When: Saturday, March 14, 9 - 10 a.m.
Where: Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road.

FAMILY FUN

AN "EGGS"TRAORDINARY EVENT SPRING EGG HUNT FOR KIDS AGE 8 AND UNDER

ENJOY SNACKS, GAMES, PHOTOS with the Bunny, entertainment and more. This "eggs"traordinary annual event is sponsored by Northwestern Health Sciences University, Parks and Recreation and the Bloomington Breakfast Optimist Club.

When: Saturday, April 11, 9:30 a.m. - noon.

Where: Northwestern Health Sciences University, 84th Street and Penn Avenue.

Time: Activities begin 9:30 a.m., hunt begins 11 a.m.



SPRING DREAMING

PICNIC SHELTERS AVAILABLE FOR RENT

PICNIC SHELTERS ARE AVAILABLE to rent for picnics, receptions, reunions or meetings. Register now to use April through mid-October. Shelters have electricity, grills, restrooms and drinking fountains. In addition, City parks offer playground equipment, volleyball and horseshoe courts, walking trails and softball fields. Reduced rates are available for nonprofit Bloomington youth groups.

MOIR PARK

104th Street at Morgan Avenue.

Shelter 1: Accommodates 200+.
\$201 + tax.

Shelter 2: Accommodates 50.
\$137 + tax.

WEST BUSH LAKE PARK

94th Street at West Bush Lake Road.

Shelter 1: Accommodates 200.
\$201 + tax.

Shelter 2: Accommodates 100.
\$137 + tax.

EAST BUSH LAKE PARK

9140 East Bush Lake Road

Shelter 3: Accommodates 200.
\$265 + tax.

BLOOMINGTON FAMILY AQUATIC CENTER (BFAC)

DISCOUNTED SEASON PASSES FOR RESIDENTS

BUY YOUR BFAC RESIDENT SEASON PASS before April 15 and receive \$2 off or purchase your pass prior to June 6 and receive \$1 off per pass. Passes are sold at the Parks and Recreation counter at Civic Plaza through June 5. Beginning June 8, all passes and pictures will be processed at the Bloomington Family Aquatic Center, 301 East 90th Street, daily from 4 - 7 p.m. The BFAC is open June 13 - August 23 and weekends through Labor Day.



2009 Resident Season Pass pricing (Prices include tax)

Infant	Age 1 and under	Free
Child	Age 2 - 10	\$14.50
Young Adult	Age 11 - 15	\$24.75
Adult	Age 16 - 54	\$45.50
Senior	Age 55 and up	\$14.50

For more information, call Parks and Recreation or visit the City's website at www.ci.bloomington.mn.us, keyword: Aquatic center.

CENTER FOR THE ARTS

LOCATED IN BLOOMINGTON CIVIC PLAZA at the corner of West 98th Street and Old Shakopee Road, the Center for the Arts is a first-class facility housing eight arts organizations. For facility information, call 952-563-8889. For exhibit information and events, call 952-563-8567 or visit the City's website, www.ci.bloomington.mn.us, keyword: Calendar.

EXHIBITIONS



Reader, by Richard Lack.

Hours: M - F 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Sa 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Su 1 - 10 p.m.



The Joy of Adornment, by Linda Davis.

INEZ GREENBERG GALLERY

Distinguished Company: A Retrospective of Works, featuring the paintings, drawings and etchings of Minnesota artists Richard Lack, Don Koestner and Stephen Gjerston, runs through February 20.

atrium gallery

More than Meets the Eye, featuring the Fiber Art Study Group, runs through March 1. This textile exhibition consists primarily of contemporary quilts and other original and unique fiber works.

For all theater tickets, call the Box Office at 952-563-8575.

SCHNEIDER THEATER

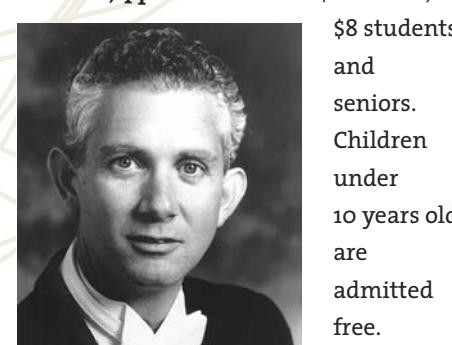
BLOOMINGTON CIVIC THEATER



Bloomington Civic Theater presents the stage adaptation of Miguel de Cervantes' classic tale Man of La Mancha, through March 1. Tickets are \$25 adults, \$22 seniors and \$19 students.

MEDALIST CONCERT BAND A GRAND TRADITION

The Medalist Concert Band, conducted by Professor Jerry Luckhardt, presents A Grand Tradition, Sunday, March 8, 4 p.m. Tickets are \$10 adults,



\$8 students and seniors. Children under 10 years old are admitted free.

Professor Jerry Luckhardt.

CONTINENTAL BALLET COMPANY CINDERELLA

The Continental Ballet Company will be performing Cinderella, March 20 and 28, 7:30 p.m. and March 21 and 29, 3 p.m. Cinderella is a full-length ballet based on the classic fairy tale. Tickets are \$12 - \$24.



ART NEVER TASTED THIS GOOD!



TASTE of CHOCOLATE

BENEFITING THE BLOOMINGTON FINE ARTS COUNCIL

Sunday, March 15, 1 - 5 p.m.

Bloomington Center for the Arts
1800 W. Old Shakopee Road

THE TASTE OF CHOCOLATE is a midwest dessert competition and benefit for the Bloomington Fine Arts Council presented in partnership with the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce and sponsored by *Minnesota Monthly*, The Toro Company and HealthPartners. Enjoy savory chocolates by chefs and chocolatiers, entertainment, silent auction and a raffle drawing for fabulous prizes.

2009 HONORARY PASTRY CHEF

Rhonda Siebert of Truffles & Tortes

FEATURING CHOCOLATES BY

- ◆ Award Baking International
- ◆ Blue Water Grill, Hilton Airport
- ◆ Creative Confectionaire ◆ Godiva Chocolatier – Mall of America
- ◆ Kevin Lindee ◆ McCormick and Schmick Seafood Restaurant
- ◆ Muffuletta in the Park
- ◆ Mr. B. Chocolatier ◆ Obsession Chocolates ◆ Patisserie Margo
- ◆ restaurant Max at the Hotel Minneapolis ◆ River Chocolate Company ◆ Seasons at Dolce Oak Ridge ◆ Truffles & Tortes
- ◆ Woolley's Prime Steakhouse

Tickets are \$25 in advance; \$30 at the door. Early bird entrance is 12 - 1 p.m. with an additional \$10 donation per ticket. Purchase tickets at the Bloomington Center for the Arts, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, call 952-563-8575 or visit www.tasteofchocolate.org. For more information, call 952-563-8567.

SAFETY FIRST

STARS OF FOOD SAFETY

BLOOMINGTON FOOD COLLABORATIVE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, Environmental Health has organized quarterly meetings to promote food safety through sharing information with chefs, food service and grocery store managers, school cooks and hotel managers. Through education and communication, the City is able to improve food safety for everyone. This is the goal of the Bloomington Food Collaborative.

Every year the Collaborative helps select winners of the Food Safety Awards, which are presented by Mayor Gene Winstead at the annual Diamond Service Awards. Food Safety Award candidates are selected by Bloomington Environmental Health inspectors based on the results of food safety inspections. Candidates are interviewed and scored by their industry peers.

Hosted by the Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Diamond Service Awards event is considered the hospitality industry Academy Awards. Receiving a Food Safety Award is a source of pride and dedication to food safety. The event is the only one of its kind in Minnesota and one of just a few in the country.

The 13th Annual Diamond Service Awards will take place at the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel on **Thursday, March 19**. Seventeen employees will be honored for their outstanding commitment to customer service in the Bloomington hospitality industry. More than 300 nominations were reviewed. A Spirit of Hospitality Award will also be presented.

For more information on the Bloomington Food Collaborative, call Environmental Health Manager Lynn Moore at 952-563-8970. For more information on the Diamond Service Awards, contact Heather Proskey at 952-278-8514 or hproskey@bloomingtonmn.org.



Dino Contolatis, owner and manager of Gyropolis, accepted a Diamond Service Food Safety Award.

KEEP KIDS SAFE DURING SPRING BREAK

ENCOURAGING TEENS TO ABSTAIN FROM ALCOHOL

APRIl IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER, which means spring break for many Bloomington teens – a time to relax with friends and enjoy a respite from school. Unfortunately for some, it also means an opportunity to go to parties and use alcohol. Although teens may not realize it, those who imbibe in alcohol are increasing their likelihood of being involved in traffic crashes, violence and sexual assaults.

According to the 2007 Minnesota Student Survey, 35 percent of Bloomington ninth-grade students who reported using alcohol said they got it at parties.



If your teen wants to have a party, ensure it's alcohol free. Follow these tips:

- 1 Establish a maximum number and age limit for the guest list.
- 2 Tell parents about the party and explain there will be no alcohol.
- 3 Walk through the party area often; your presence is important.
- 4 If you suspect a teen guest is intoxicated, contact his or her parents/guardians immediately.
- 5 Have guests remain in the party location; do not allow teens to go back and forth to a parking lot or their car.



PLAY EVERY DAY

GUIDES OFFER FAMILIES ADVICE TO GET KIDS MOVING

THE US DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES recently recommended children engage in one hour or more of moderate or vigorous physical activity daily.

"To meet these recommendations, physical activity must be easy to fit into busy lifestyles," Bloomington Public Health Nutritionist Joan Bulfer said.

To help families with young children, Bloomington Public Health has two physical activity resource guides available. "Play Every Day" helps families with young children find low-cost places to be active in our community. "Fit Activities for Kids" offers ideas for active play at home. Funds for the guides were provided by UCare and Action for Healthy Kids Minnesota.

Both guides are free and available for download on the City's website, www.ci.bloomington.mn.us, keywords: Play Every Day.

SPRUCE UP YOUR HOME
HOME IMPROVEMENT LOANS

THE BLOOMINGTON HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (HRA) is accepting applications through **March 27, 2009**, for its Home Improvement Deferred Loan Program.

Loans of up to \$35,000 are available to Bloomington homeowners. There are no monthly payments. Repayment occurs when the home is sold, transferred or conveyed. Interest is charged at an annual rate of 5 percent of the original loan principal for the first 10 years. No additional interest accrues after 10 years.

A lead risk assessment is required for all homes built before 1978.

The loans are to help maintain the condition of housing and neighborhoods. Applications are ranked and processed according to need.

Eligible repairs include replacing roofs, electrical, heating and plumbing systems, gutters, windows, doors, insulation, siding, soffits and fascia, exterior painting and foundation, sidewalk or step repairs.

Ineligible repairs include decorating, additions, finishing basements, remodeling and garage construction.

To apply for a Home Improvement Deferred Loan, you must be the owner-occupant of your home and have sufficient equity to cover the loan amount. *Income guidelines apply. See table below.*

INCOME GUIDELINES

Persons Maxim in household*	um gross income**
1	\$43,050
2	\$49,200
3	\$55,350
4	\$61,500
5	\$66,400
6	\$71,350
7	\$76,250
8 or more	\$81,200

* Includes all residents of household, related and unrelated, including renters.

** Subject to change.



Loan applications will be accepted at the HRA office at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, until Friday, March 27, 2009. For more information or to receive an application, call 952-563-8937.

PATH OF A COUNCIL LAND USE DECISION

THE CITY OFTEN FACES land use decisions, requiring choices among different interests. The Mayor and City Council consider the interests of the developer, as well as the neighborhood and long-term community benefits, while abiding by the legal framework that enables their procedure. The following step-by-step look at a recent case shows how the process works.

STEP 1 PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Richdale proposes a 418-unit apartment with two 75-foot-high, four-story buildings and five-level parking structures. The proposal requires extending Stanley Avenue to connect 82nd Street with American Boulevard and increasing the capacity of the sanitary sewer. Because the proposal is not consistent with the City's *Comprehensive Plan* and the site's zoning, the application also includes *Comprehensive Plan* and zoning amendments.



STEP 2 PUBLIC HEARING NOTICES

The City schedules a Planning Commission hearing. State law requires advertising the hearing. Notices are mailed to surrounding property owners and printed in the *Sun Current*. Details are posted on the City's website.

PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE PROCESS

PROPERTY OWNERS CAN APPLY FOR CHANGES

Why does the City hold hearings on significant land use proposals? All property owners have a right to reasonable use of their land. The City is obligated to accept and process (but not necessarily approve) any complete application. State law requires that decisions be based on a complete record established by the applicant, City staff, advisory commissions and public input. The City cannot preemptively reject an application without completing all the steps leading up to a Council decision.

LAND USE PLAN AND ORDINANCES

The City's *Land Use Guide Plan* describes how land can be used in Bloomington. State law requires the plan be consistent with the Metropolitan Council's regional plans, including transportation, sewers, housing and public facilities. To view the current land use map, go to www.ci.bloomington.mn.us, keywords: Comprehensive Plan.

Land Use Proposal
For This Property
For More Information
www.citydev.info
(952) 563-8920

INFORMING RESIDENTS

The City has instituted a procedure that requires a sign to be installed on a site where a comprehensive plan change, rezoning or conditional use permit application is being processed.

For information on the City's *Comprehensive Land Use Plan*, zoning ordinance and development standards, call 952-563-8920.

THE PROPOSAL

The Richdale Group proposes developing a 9.6-acre parcel with a vacant industrial building on 82nd Street east of Normandale Boulevard. The site is located between hotels and a single-family residential neighborhood.

STEP 5 PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING

Staff gives a synopsis of its report and the applicant presents their proposal. Residents are invited to share their views; many state their concerns about traffic, sewer capacity and neighborhood compatibility of the four-story buildings. The Commission weighs the evidence, reviews the required findings in the ordinance and votes to forward recommendations of approval with seven conditions to the City Council.



STEP 6 CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

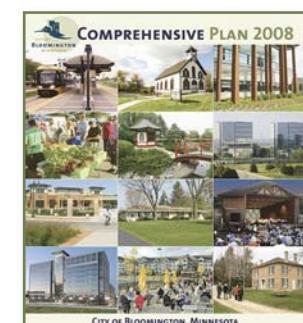
The City Council's first task is to make a complete public record describing the application and its impacts. The following items are included:

- Environmental Assessment worksheet.
- Staff report and recommendations of Planning and Traffic and Transportation Commission hearings.
- Correspondence between staff, the applicant and the public.
- Testimony from the applicant and public.
- Zoning ordinance's required findings and the City Attorney's recommendations.



STEP 7 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CHANGE AND SITE PLAN REVISIONS

Next, the Council acts on the application. In this case, the Council approves a *Comprehensive Plan* change, rezoning and site plan with a memorandum of understanding and several conditions of approval. Important provisions are: City will not extend Stanley Avenue until it has the right-of-way from other parcels. The funds available to pay for street improvement and sanitary sewer capacity must be available. The *Comprehensive Plan* change is submitted to the Metropolitan Council. The developer and City will continue work to resolve the sewer capacity and street extension issue.



STEP 8 REVISED PLAN

When the Richdale Group determines it cannot meet all conditions of approval, it amends its proposal to reduce the number of apartment units. The new proposal is consistent with available sanitary sewer capacity, does not rely on the immediate extension of Stanley Avenue for access and reduces height of buildings and moves them farther from single-family homes. The City Council adopts the revised plan with new conditions.



STEP 9 BUILDING PERMITS

Richdale Group will submit construction plans for building permits in 2009.